



# News Release

## **WISCONSIN ARMY AND AIR NATIONAL GUARD**

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **Wisconsin National Guard establishes new Rapid Reaction Force**

Ever since the September 11 terrorist attacks on America nearly three years ago, there has been no more important mission for the National Guard than homeland defense and security. On September 1, 2004, the Wisconsin National Guard announced the creation of a National Guard Rapid Reaction Force designed to deter terrorist acts or to respond to a terrorist incident in Wisconsin.

The Wisconsin National Guard Rapid Reaction Force is made up primarily of soldiers from 2nd Battalion, 127th Infantry. This Appleton-based infantry battalion will provide forces in two packages: a 125-soldier force capable of a speedy initial response anywhere in the state, and a larger force of up to 375 additional soldiers who can respond within 24 hours, if needed, to sustain operations for days after the initial response. The Rapid Reaction Force soldiers are drawn from units throughout the battalion, which includes armories in Appleton, Waupun, Ripon, Green Bay, Fond du Lac and Marinette.

National Guard troops from Wisconsin have responded to state emergencies since 1881, so the Guard's ability to provide military forces anywhere in the state is not new. But the Reaction Force is specifically designed to meet terrorist threats the nation has faced since 9-11. The Reaction Force soldiers are specially trained and equipped to support local, state and, when required, federal agencies. Primary capabilities are site security, presence patrols and shows of force, establishment of roadblocks or checkpoints, control of civil disturbances, and protection of specified critical assets or infrastructure.

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## National Guard Reaction Force

Page 2

The Reaction Force can also be pre-positioned prior to an event and can provide security to key assets or facilities when threat levels are raised.

“Job One for the National Guard is and always has been homeland defense,” according to Maj. Gen. Al Wilkening, commander of the state’s 9,900-member Army and Air National Guard.

“Wisconsin’s citizens deserve nothing less than their National Guard’s continued focus on the vital homeland defense mission.” Wilkening said. “The Guard is prepared to deploy anywhere in the world — and certainly anywhere in Wisconsin — where Guard soldiers and airmen can help keep Wisconsin and America safe from those who would cause us harm.”

The new Reaction Force is not the only military response capability of the Wisconsin Guard. Even though about 1,450 Guard members from the state are presently serving on active duty, the balance of the Wisconsin Guard — more than 8,300 soldiers and airmen from units in 67 communities across the state — stand ready to answer the governor’s call whenever life and safety are threatened and the Guard’s unique capabilities can enhance the state’s preparedness or response efforts.

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